# Fellowship in Prayer

"For a world united in prayer"

*You never become truly spiritual by sitting down and wishing to become so. You must undertake something so great that you cannot accomplish it unaided.*

— Phillips Brooks

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## OUR PURPOSE

To promote the practice of prayer among ALL religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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# PEACE

*IT IS AN OLD SAYING that ships come in on peaceful seas. The same applies to man: great ideas are not born of a restless brain. Inner peace is conducive to achievement.*

There are many who seek happiness, but few who think of it in terms of peace: this accounts for the few really happy people. The tempo of modern living has lost the significance of peacefulness. The eagerness for possession has overshadowed a greater one—peace of mind.

*IT IS FALLACIOUS to feel the need of constant stimulation, the restless urge to run, the inane impulse of competition in order to attain. These ships never come to port, they are tossed from one wave to another on the sea of life—arriving nowhere.*

Peace is not passivity. Peace of mind is not being inert or inactive. *A peaceful mind is powerful, balanced and collected in its forces.* Ideas born of such a state of mind are definite and accurate, as well as purposeful. Genius knows this art—the art of excluding all other thoughts while it executes and creates in perfect composure.

*BEING STILL IS an accomplishment—stilling the body and the mind, lifting the emotions above turmoil. The law of tension and release should apply to man as it does to everything in life: stop and go—rest and work—stillness and action. There must be moments for reinforcement.*

"Be still and know that I am God," is a potent remedy for this tempo of living.

*PEACE IS POWER.*

— Sara Robbins

*GUEST EDITORIAL*

# PRAYER

Many people do not appear to be interested either in the existence of God or in the meaning of prayer. Some regard prayer as an effete superstition. Prayer, we are told, does not help us to face the difficulties and problems of life honestly or freely; it is an escape from reality into a world of dream and make-believe.

What is the common element in prayer? It cannot be simply the use of certain words and phrases. Genuine prayer is always rooted in the sense of need.

*PRAYER SPRINGS* from a sense of need which God alone can satisfy. To pray is not merely to make this or that petition; it is to lift up our soul to God, to adore His greatness, to open our heart to His presence, because we know that He alone can fulfill our deepest and truest need. It is true that what people call prayer has often meant something very different from that. For some prayer is just a matter of mechanical routine, of saying "prayers" without entering inwardly into their meaning. For others it is a matter chiefly of asking for help in times of special danger or difficulty.

How exactly can prayer help us? God is not a great magician who will step in by a miracle to save us from danger, if we use the right sort of spell; and prayer is not a sort of magic guaranteed to save us from harm or to bring us prosperity. "God is our refuge and strength", says the psalmist, "a very present help in trouble". No one ever uttered truer words than these; but they do not mean that God will banish our troubles if we ask Him. They mean rather that if we come into the presence of God, if we lift up our hearts to His infinite and eternal life, which is ever close to us, we shall be enabled to face whatever difficulties and trials and distresses may come to us with a spirit of quiet courage which will give us the victory.

*"LET ME NOT PRAY* to be sheltered from dangers", cries Tagore, "but to be fearless in facing them; let me not beg for the stilling of my pain, but for the heart to conquer it." During the war there were some who proved the power which comes through prayer in the Concentration Camps of Germany. Testimony has been given to the fact that those who came through best were the men and women who had the faith to look beyond themselves to the power of the Spirit. *Prayer did not save them from their sufferings; it gave them the heart to conquer them.*

But prayer is not simply or mainly a matter of facing trial, hardship, suffering; it is a matter of facing life as a whole in the light and strength which come from God. People think of prayer especially in connection with difficulty and trouble, because it is at such times that we are most conscious of our need. Yet as a matter of fact it is often in times of prosperity, of success, of good fortune that we are tempted to lose touch with the deeper things of life.

*IT IS OFTEN WHEN* everything is going well with us that we are tempted to get wrapped up in ourselves and to forget the Love of God and the needs and sufferings of our fellow creatures. It is one great fact about true prayer that it delivers us from that temptation; it saves us from the narrowness of soul which shuts us in upon ourselves; it saves us from the blindness which hides from our eyes the Light of God, and closes our hearts to his universal Love. One of the finest prayers I know is that uttered by an ancient Indian seer in the Upanishads, "Lead us from darkness to Light, from error to truth, from death to immortality." A medieval Christian saint said that "the aim of prayer is union with God." That is what prayer means at its deepest and best. Through prayer we draw near to God; we look beyond ourselves to His infinite and eternal Life; we seek in communion with Him to be saved from our weakness and selfishness, to be made one with His Light and Peace, His Power and His Love.

So far as that is its meaning, prayer is not an escape from reality. It is the very opposite of that, since through prayer we come into contact with God, who is the highest and greatest of all realities. But God is not only the highest and greatest of all realities; He is the deepest and inmost Life and Soul of all that life. In drawing near to God, we do not withdraw ourselves from the sense of the needs and sufferings of our fellow creatures; we enter more deeply and widely into contact with them. *"When one knows Thee,"* says Tagore, *"then alien there is none; then no door is shut."* The Love that makes us one with God by that very fact makes us one in fellowship, in compassion and sympathy, with all that live. When we are lifted into the divine presence, we are saved from the ignorance and blindness which divide us from our fellow creatures. We see the One Life that flows through all, and we are moved by the love which gives itself in helpfulness and service.

— *Sidney Spencer*

*—The Inquirer, July 1962 (Abridged)*
(In THE INDIAN MESSENGER)

## *THE NEED FOR A SPIRITUAL TEACHER*

*Paul Hourihan*

*Dear Spiritual Aspirant:*

You ask why each one may not exercise his own independent judgment and interpret the scriptures according to his own lights. Why, in other words, is it necessary to have a spiritual mentor do this for us? Well, whatever is right on this question, people will no doubt continue to interpret scripture in their own way, each one believing that the light of God is inspiring him. The truth is that only a holy man can impart to us the inner meaning of the scriptures, only someone who has known God directly. He may not be a saint or a prophet, such as the scriptures are written about, but his spiritual experience must be genuine and his calling as a spiritual guide must be ordained by God.

After all, are not the scriptures—the Bible and other holy books of the world—all about God-consciousness and how to attain it, the experience of the divine and how each may have the same experience? I think you will agree that, that is what they are mainly about. But such an experience is another area of consciousness, completely, from the one with which we are all familiar. It is beyond the senses, body, and mind as we know it, beyond the imagination, beyond memory. *If we have not had such an experience,* how can we intelligently impart the truths of it as recorded in the scriptures or interpret the sayings and incidents which are intended to lead us to such an experience?

In other fields we do not hesitate to accept the necessity of expert individual guidance when we want to gain deep knowledge of a subject, or of years of study and discipline to gain mastery ourselves. But in the field of religion alone, the most important and difficult of all, each of us believes he is an expert from the beginning, that the Spirit of God is speaking to us directly and clearly all the time, that there is no reason why we cannot sit down and read and understand the Bible at any time, without expert instruction, without making a long and patient effort to find a spiritual guide, without placing ourselves at his feet—once having found him and known this for certain—as he begins to mould and lead us and prepare us for the hour of our own spiritual awakening. This whole idea betrays a most abysmal ignorance on our part and is one more testimony to the endless manifestations of human egoism.

Where, you ask, can we find a spiritual teacher, when will he come? The teacher will come when we are ready for him. Have no doubt about this. We do not, in fact, have to search very far. All we have to do is to want him, deserve him, and be ready for his coming. He will appear one day when the time is right, and we will recognize him when he comes. This is a universal experience that has been demonstrated down the ages.

He will teach us all we want to know and answer the questions we have been asking ourselves (and others) so long. He will teach us to meditate, for example. There is an art to meditation. We cannot do it on our own, yet it is central and indispensable in spiritual progress. Certain methods and principles have been laid down for hundreds, thousands of years and the teacher will communicate these to us, always on an individual basis. Sometimes he will do this in a direct, lucid manner, sometimes intangibly, in a mysterious way, as soul communicating with soul. And he will study us day and night, come to know us as we do not know ourselves, as no one else in the world, not even our parents or our spouse, knows us, and give us mental and spiritual exercises suited to us alone.

Until he comes, we only play with spiritual life. If he has not yet come, it means that God does not think we are yet ready for the journey in earnest—ready, that is, to give up everything for it; that we are not yet strong enough in our potential. For spirituality, the power to endure in the life of the spirit, the incentive to go on, the spirit of understanding of higher things, *can only be transmitted by one human being to another.* By ourselves we cannot move a straw or understand much.

We move in the unknown in spiritual things, in areas where there are no precedents in our experience. We will be overcome with fear or uncertainty or fanaticism if we proceed too far on our own. The teacher will help us. We can talk to him, as to no other; share with him all our innermost thoughts, make our confessions and listen to him like a child eager for more and more wisdom. His very example will inspire us to go on, for we will want to be like him, and he will show us how. His prayers will help us continually on the way. He will save us from pitfalls and pick us up easily when we have fallen. His prayers to God for us have more power than any other prayer and are always answered. By close association with him we will begin to resemble him and thus will grow holy. The realization of his great love for us will make us humble; we become aware that he will devote his life to help-

ing us, that our spiritual welfare is of paramount importance to him. This fact, and our knowledge of his holiness, his spiritual veracity, will bring us the humility that will help to wipe away our egos, the great enemy to our progress.

Gradually we will surrender ourselves to him *and thus learn how to surrender to Christ,* or to whomever is our ideal, and thence learn to surrender to God. Is surrender to God an easy thing? How can we do it? By finding a spiritual teacher *and learning the art of surrender with him.* For it is difficult for a human being to feel reverence or to sustain this feeling for very long. Only in association with another human being, whose interest in us is completely selfless and sanctioned by God, can we learn.

Often you speak about Truth and say that Truth itself is enough. *But Truth must be embodied in a human being before it can be made real.* We must be able to touch Truth and hear it speak, we must feel its warmth in a living being. Until then it never becomes a matter of urgency and fiery conviction to us; and Truth's golden heart, divine Love, does not exert its full influence over us. We learn about Truth from a man whom God sends to us when we are ripe to begin the spiritual life with some clear awareness of what is involved in it.

That means that we will have certain qualities of mind and character that the teacher will look for before he accepts us as a genuine spiritual aspirant. *Desire* is the primary qualification: desire for freedom from bondage to the body and the world, desire for spiritual realization, for God. Desire alone is sufficient if it is strong enough, for out of desire comes the emotion, the longing, the intense aspiration that forges our wills and in the end it is the power of our wills that conquers for us, that eventually overcomes everything. Next to desire in importance is grit, a firmness of mind and perseverance of spirit that will keep us struggling on even through obstacles and discouragements that defeat others, and through days of boredom and weariness. If we do not have this grit, we cannot amount to anything.

He will also notice how we listen when he speaks about God and spiritual things. If we talk too much, ask too many questions, engage him in conversation, these are negative signs. But if a stillness comes over our minds at these times, a strange, immediate stillness, such as a serpent feels at the sound of music, that is a good sign. He will notice that. He will see that we are receptive, that instantly we know when the time has come to listen, receive, absorb. Related to this is our ability to assimilate spiritual instruc-

tion, an all-important gift, which we have to bring to the association with us: it is a gift from God and is, in part, the result of the distillation of all the experiences we have lived through in this and, as some believe, in other lives. The teacher will know very soon whether we have this ingredient. One way he can find out is by our capacity to respond with ideas that cannot be accounted for in our past known experience, that can be explained only by the grace of God acting upon our intuitive faculty.

Finally he will note our evaluation of the world. The genuine spiritual aspirant, even at the beginning of his journey, has a deep conviction that the world is not as real as it seems to be, that there is a reality behind the world that he wants to know and experience, that all the passions, ambitions and values of the world as such are a snare and a delusion. He feels all this instinctively. If he does not, if he takes the world at its face value and enjoys it on its own terms, he has little chance of success in spiritual life. But if there is an outlaw strain in his blood, a deep-lying spirit of independence and valor, and even defiance, his chances are good.

Once again I would like to remind you that the only ones who can tell us anything about God that is true are those who have actually known God. Not those who know *about* God, but those who have known God directly. There are such people, more of them than you think. Their words, and the words of scriptures, are our only guides; they are all we have as we begin finally to go forward in earnest toward the goal supreme: the realization of God and the direct experience of the soul's divinity.

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*TRUTH IS ONE, SAGES CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES..*

*When we survey the whole field of religion, we find a great variety in the thoughts that have prevailed there; but the feelings on the one hand and the conduct on the other are almost always the same... The theories which Religion generates, being thus variable, are secondary; and if you wish to grasp her essence, you must look to the feelings and the conduct as being the more constant elements.*

—*William James in*
VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

# YUGEN

*Bess Foster Smith*

*HAVEN'T WE ALL* at sometime looked at a Japanese print, garden or flower arrangement that intrigued us—but we didn't know why?

A Japanese poem explains why:

*In the Bon Lanterns*
*I glimpse the spirit of Yugen*
*Flickering, evanescent.*

But to our Western minds the poem, too, needs explaining. The Oriental says that "Yugen" is that quality that enthralls us in the beauty of simplicity and tantalizes us with the feeling that it means more than meets the eye.

Yugen is that principle expressed in art that declares the half is greater than the whole. It sounds paradoxical, but nevertheless it is truly basic in art.

For instance: it is true that a half blown rosebud is more beautiful than the full blown rose; the crescent moon more enticing than the full moon. This is because the half appeals to the imagination, whereas the whole perceived through the senses leaves nothing for the "inner sense" to create and make its own.

*CERTAIN OTHER THINGS* prove that Yugen is also basic to life as well as to art. When old books, pictures, flowers or poems held dear at some time in your life bring a feeling of nostalgia, it is because life itself possesses Yugen—the capacity to suggest more meaning than appears on the surface of these trivial things. You invest them with love and beauty and some inner longing and they become symbols of your real self, now enfolded in your memory.

Thus physical things, contacted through the senses, appear to be only symbols or brief glimpses of another reality, that inner and deeper life—the life of the spirit.

*The half is greater than the whole,*
*A paradox of ancient truth.*
*A half blown rose can feed the soul,*
*A crescent moon a lovelorn youth.*

*This is the mystery of art*
*That seeks for beauty yet unseen;*
*We gaze a moment at a part*
*And visualize a lovely dream.*

## THE LIGHT TOUCH

George Arliss, the actor, in his autobiography tells of his difficulties in mastering one of his parts when he was a young actor playing in the provinces of England. A dream saved him one night.

Sleeping uneasily, and worrying about his part, there came to him, in a vision, a lady all in white, holding a white wand in her hand. She said to him, "You are troubled about your part. The difficulty with you is that you are holding it like this—" and she gripped her wand hard and struck it on the ground. "Now, you should hold it like this—" and she took the wand easily between her thumb and middle finger and walked up and down with it in this light and relaxed manner.

George Arliss did not wait to dream further, but awoke immediately and realized that he had found the secret of his fault. From that time on he played the part with ease and nonchalance.

Isn't that just what's the matter with so many of us as we play our parts in life? If we would quit grasping the staff of life so hard, and take it lightly, life would be easier. We strain too much, strive too much, take it all too seriously. More nonchalance, more relaxation of body and mind are the secrets of happiness.

*RELAXED, PLIABLE* muscles, the ease of performance, are the marks of artistry.

— Adapted from THE CHRISTIAN

## *SET YOUR GOAL HIGH*

*Set your goal high, mindful that the true worth of attainment is not found in the attainment itself but rather in the struggle to attain, for it is only through struggle that we grow in understanding, in wisdom and in strength and that we become useful and fruitful in the service of our fellow-creatures.*

— Harry Halsey Starrett

# THE LOST CHORD

*Mark Halpern*

*IN ORDER to achieve anything meritorious in life, to bring to full realization one's own potentialities and serve the highest welfare of all humanity, man must believe in himself. When a man believes in himself and in his Maker, he possesses the indispensable quality of self-confidence. And self-confidence is the parent of perseverance and enthusiasm. Together they form an invincible fiery trinity of spiritual will that makes for victorious and adventurous living. With that godly trinity, nothing is impossible; without it, nothing of high attainment is possible.*

*The one outstanding characteristic that marks the great geniuses, is their unshakable self-confidence. Thus it was that Paderewski, the immortal Polish composer and pianist, did not lose faith in himself when he was told in his youth that he would never amount to anything as a musician. He had found the star of his destiny and naught could turn him aside from his course.*

*YET THERE ARE INDIVIDUALS, more sensitive to criticism and not so strong in self-confidence, who often times lose faith in themselves and falter on their destined path. They never quite find themselves again, until a few words of appreciative understanding restores their self-confidence—or until they learn to keep their eye on the star, their hand on the helm, and to trust God and their own soul . . .*

* * * *

IN ENGLAND of the eighteenth century, in a village of Kent County, there lived an organist, by the name of Joshua. He maintained himself by playing the organ in the little village church and by giving music lessons to some of the children in the parish.

At times, feeling transported on the winged impetus of an exalted mood, Joshua would find himself improvising. Such chords that thundered forth from the organ—such vibrant power and glory of sound, throbbing with the fiery spirit of creative life! He seemed to grow taller, expanding in the majestic swell and surge of the pure tonal magnificence; until the roof and walls of the little church could no longer contain him.

Ah, and then it was that Joshua, borne ever aloft on mighty billows of heavenly sound, would seem to pass through the Golden Gates that led into a Higher Realm of music. Here he would find himself seated

at a wondrous giant organ such as he had never seen or even heard of down on earth. And the chords that he played on that mighty celestial instrument, filled him with such rapture they made him bow his head in humble reverence while tears of gratitude coursed down his cheeks.

*In a deepening sense of humility and devotion, Joshua realized he was at the organ of a vast Cosmic Cathedral of God, wherein a great multitude had gathered to offer up their worship to the One Supreme Creator of the Universe. And their faces were illumined with transcendent joy and serenity as he poured into their souls the supernal beauty and majesty of the organ tones.*

*THERE CAME A GLORIOUS outburst of song from the great choir of the Cosmic Cathedral. And always one face would stand out from all the others in that heavenly choir. It was the radiant gentle face of his beloved of long ago, who had passed from the earthly scene a fortnight before the date of their marriage. He tried to put into his playing all the sublime beauty he had been unable to express in words when she was alive.*

No wonder then that when Joshua finally returned to himself at the organ of the little village church, he brought with him the ethereal radiation of the Higher Realms. His heart was filled with a boundless joy, which he tried to communicate to the others after the service. But, such ineffable bliss was never meant to be expressed in mere finite language. The greatest poets have tried it, and often failed. How much more difficult was it for poor Joshua, who, far from inheriting the gift of eloquence, could reveal his feelings only with strained effort and therefore with clumsy ineptitude. Often what he intended to be a warm effusion of loving fellowship, was construed by the others as the maudlin nonsense of senility.

Thus it came about that a new and much younger organist from a town nearby was called in to supersede Joshua.

The blow left Joshua stunned. All his life he had lived and served in the community; until he had come to regard the people not merely as his friends, but as his own family. He had tried to share with them all that was most nobly beautiful and of highest worth in his life. And in the end they had cast him off. . . .

*LATE ONE SUNDAY NIGHT as Joshua lay wearily in his bed, unable to find sleep or rest, his darkened chamber suddenly filled with*

*a pulsating luminosity in which there appeared to his startled gaze the beloved of his youthful years. Her radiant gentle face looked at him with a tender understanding smile.*

*"Ah, Joshua, why have you not come to visit me for so long in the Cathedral on high? Why do you burden your heart with such sorrow that you cannot ascend beyond mortal consciousness?"*

*"Forgive me, my beloved. I have tried to raise myself to that wondrous Cathedral in the heavens—I have wanted to hear that mighty choir and to see your lovely face again. But I cannot rise, my beloved—something seems to have gone out of me. I fear I can no longer bring out beauty from the organ. Take me with you, my beloved one. I am so alone here on earth."*

*"Nay, Joshua. Your time has not yet come. The music has not died within you. It is only your mortal disillusion and self-pity that makes you think so. You still have much of beauty to give to the world. Listen, then Joshua. On the morrow, at twilight, go to the village church. Inside you will find the thread of your future."*

*And with those words she was gone.*

Joshua, greatly encouraged by the visit of his beloved, did as he had been instructed. The following day, when the sun began to disappear in the west, he went to the church and entered it.

*IN THE DARK EMPTINESS,* his eyes wandered to the organ where he had so often sat and played throughout the years. Slowly he moved up front, until he stood before the organ. Then, seating himself, he began to play.

He had drifted into Handel's "Largo," when the door opened and somebody came into the church.

Joshua stopped and looked about. He started back at the sight of the handsome elderly gentleman with fashionable clothes and powdered wig who had entered and was now slowly advancing toward the organ.

Joshua was telling himself that somewhere he had seen that face before, when the other spoke up: "Please continue—I have never heard my "Largo" performed with better effect."

With a gasp of incredulity, Joshua rose quickly to his feet and stood there—stammering, "Handel—Handel—George Frederick Handel—the Master!"

"Calm yourself, my good man. I am only a mortal—a human being—the same as you. I know you are amazed to see me. But it is not

so mysterious. A year ago, I happened to be passing through this village, on a Sunday, when I heard your improvising.

"I came in, found a seat, and listened. I had to be on my way; so I could not wait until the end of the service to tell you of the great enjoyment your music gave me. But during the past year, between my concert engagements in London, I have often thought about you. There is need of organists of your ability in the city. I want you to arrange your affairs and come back to London with me. But first, play for me. Improvise the way you did that Sunday a year ago."

*SLOWLY AS THOUGH IN A DREAM, Joshua seated himself again at the organ. Handel—to think that the great Handel himself had come back just to hear him play! . . . His fingers began to glide over the keys as though seeking for a long lost chord, from which to launch his flight of melody into the Higher Realms where he knew his beloved was waiting. Then, all at once, his fingers "struck one chord of music, like the sound of a great Amen! . . ."*

*A mighty paean of praise rose from the organ, as Joshua found himself in the Cosmic Cathedral on high. And in that celestial choir that sang in adoration to the Creator, he sought and found the gentle radiant face of his beloved . . . and he gave thanks to God from out a humbly joyous and grateful heart. . . .*

* * * * *

*THE SOUL OF MAN is ever searching for the "Lost Chord" of life that will bring harmony and beauty into the immortal symphony of individual existence. Sometimes the "Lost Chord" is found in the stress of dire experience. But often another's understanding and appreciation opens the way for its discovery. Then it is, that the soul is flooded with celestial melody. Of such a soul, Du Maurier says:*

* * * * *

*"He had never heard such music as this, never*
*dreamt such music was possible. He was conscious*
*while it lasted, that he saw deeper into the beauty,*
*the sadness of things, the very heart of them, and*
*their pathetic evanescence, as with a new inner eye—*
*even into eternity itself, beyond the veil . . ."*

# THE TRAGIC FACTOR

*Roy Wallace Thomas*

Of all evil, the most terrible is that which could be prevented, such as poverty, hunger, crime, war—suffering which men bring upon themselves and which never could exist in the face of collective and intelligent mercy.

*HOW EXPLAIN EVIL?* we have here the most difficult problem of the wise men. We may refuse to lift our voices or put pen to paper in a discussion of evil, but we cannot evade evil. It forces itself upon us. If we cannot solve it theoretically, we must still face it practically. This, as we shall see, was the attitude of Jesus of Nazareth.

As a starting point, there is help in the words of L. P. Jacks, first editor of *The Hibbert Journal.* He wrote: "It is no more possible to think well of evil than to think ill of good." We can refuse to be tricked into calling white black and black white. There is no solace in calling the nightshade a harmless berry, or in regarding crime with indifference. Evil is a fact. Goodness is a fact.

There is help also in recognizing the contingent nature of evil. As Lyman Abbott wrote: "Goodness is the choice of the right when we can choose the wrong. Goodness is not possible in a world in which sin is not also possible; because goodness is choosing to do the right when one is free to choose to do wrong." A robot can have no virtue. Goodness lies in choice. We can choose the good.

Above all is the help we may receive from the attitude and practice of Jesus. He did not try to solve the problem of evil theoretically, nor did he try to evade the impact of evil as a terrible fact of life and experience. He began with the practical formula which he announced early, "Resist not evil." He did not mean that in a crucial situation a man is ever justified in sacrificing intelligence and good sense. It was the spirit of Jesus that inspired Paul to declare the momentous practical admonition, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Goodness is never a negative quality. It is strategically positive and creative.

In striving to create a society of real men and real women, Jesus stressed other essential formulas. "Confess." "Forgive." Since these are not enough, he urged, "*Restore.*"

Frederic Myers was asked what he would say if granted opportunity to put but one question to the Sphinx. He replied, "I would ask

whether the power back of the universe is friendly or not." Jesus met and answered that question. He faced the total universe with perfect faith and adjustment, and he found it friendly and companionable, *in spite of evil.* He found Heart at the center and he called it "Father." He got so close to the Spirit of the universe that he could say, "My Father." He found this experience of such universal value that he also said, "Our Father." And all this in spite of the impending cross.

*HIS RECONCILIATION* to the cross came from his discovery of the formula of self-giving. God has given Himself to us—His handiwork in the universes, and His heart through the gospel. Jesus found by experience that self-giving in God's spirit is the way to abundant life. He discovered by its nature that this life is eternal, immortal. He counted not the cost.

In 1919 a country school in North Dakota was dismissed early one day because of a blizzard. Hazel Miner, a school girl, started home with her two little brothers in a buggy. It was upset. Knowing that it was useless to attempt walking, she prepared shelter under the overturned buggy and wrapped the two boys in blankets. In the dead of night, she spread her overcoat and herself over them. When rescued next afternoon, two healthy little boys were found, unconscious of the fact that their sister was frozen.

*SELF-GIVING MEANT* for Jesus the call to heroic death, and he did not waver. Do you think that today as Jesus looks back from the heart of reality that he regrets the cross? This is unthinkable. It also is unthinkable that the true hero fails to find eternal rest somewhere. Here the prophet and the poet are far safer guides than the pessimistic type of scientist. In spite of the turbulence of the ocean of life and the hard climbing required in reaching the high quests, shall it not be said, at last, in the words of Robert Louis Stevenson:

*"Home is the sailor, home from the sea,*
*And the hunter, home from the hill?"*

Historians say that in the first Golden Age of Byzantine art—in the first early Christian renaissance—*joyousness* rather than suffering infused the pictured scenes. This is the genius of Christianity. Did not Jesus make joy the climax of creative history when he said: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full?" Has not Tillich put his finger on the sublime accent of history when he says: "Eternal joy is the end of the ways of God?" Again, *all this in spite of evil and pain.* Joy is the final conqueror, not suffering.

*THE TRAGIC FACTOR* of the universe? Jesus solved the problem by brave and complete self-giving. "He gave himself for many." "He

gave himself for all." "He gave himself for us." He gave freely of his best, and revealed the self-giving of the eternal God who is greater than we can ask or think. He gave of his best and found eternal joy. Seek the best, give of your best, for it multiplies. Such living is immortal.

## INTERCESSORY PRAYER

*IT MAKES A GREAT DIFFERENCE* in our feelings towards others if their needs and their joys are on our lips in prayer; as also it makes a vast difference in their feelings towards us if they know that we are in the habit of praying for them. There is no chasm in society that cannot be firmly and permanently bridged by *intercession;* there is no feud or dislike that cannot be healed by the same exercise of love.

— Charles Brent

*YOU CANNOT POSSIBLY have any ill-temper, or show any unkind behavior to a man for whose welfare you are so much concerned, as to be his advocate with God in private. For you cannot possibly despise and ridicule that man whom your private prayers recommend to the love and favor of God.*

Intercession is the best arbitrator of all differences, the best promoter of true friendship, the best cure and preservative against all unkind tempers, all angry and haughty passions.

*THERE IS NOTHING that makes us love a man so much as praying for him.*

By considering yourself as an advocate with God for your neighbors and acquaintances, you would never find it hard to be at peace with them yourself. It would be easy to you to bear with, and forgive those for whom you particularly implored the divine mercy and forgiveness.

— William Law

# NOW IS THE TIME

*Carol M. Mandola*

Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, each of us has today, and today could be a lifetime. What we do with it, is what counts. *Now is the time:* the Law is *action and reaction.*

*MAN IS A LIVING PRISM* and shows forth to the world the light he radiates. No denial can contradict this light, since it is the light which tells beyond words just what kind of life man leads. Every act, deed and word springs from the hidden seed of man's thought. Man is a growth by Law. Because of what he is, man attracts what he has: he is the parent of all manifestations. It is imperative that he begin to live *now* and gather the gems of wisdom from the gleaming Light of Divine Law, which will regenerate him spiritually.

*HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED* why it is so difficult to understand the Truth when it is presented? It is because man is spiritually blind and unable to *know* the Truth, because of his own erroneous beliefs ingrained in his consciousness. Yet Truth is so close to him. He seeks it outside himself, when it is closer than the very breath he breathes.

It was Bailey who said, "We live by deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths." Life is like a ladder; one may ascend or descend but, either way, one leaves the essence of his character behind him. *"As ye sow, so shall ye reap."*

*TO MASTER ANYTHING* in life, whether it be the Arts, Science or Religion, man must put into practice the Truth he *knows.*

Siddhartha tells us: "Reflect deeply and reach the point where you recognize causes: for to recognize causes, is to think, and through thought alone feelings become knowledge and are not lost, but become real and begin to mature." What does man really seek? He seeks that which no one can teach because it is all *within.* The center of Being must be found; all else is as nothing.

*Greatness is born of Silence*
*Revealed by the conscience*
*Through communion with the Soul.*
*Thus comes understanding.*

# THE DIVINITY OF MAN

*Yes, we must become Brahma. We must not shrink from avowing this. Our existence is meaningless if we never can expect to realize the highest perfection that there is. If we have an aim and yet can never reach it, then it is no aim at all.*

*BUT CAN IT THEN BE SAID that there is no difference between Brahma and our individual soul? Of course the difference is obvious. Call it illusion or ignorance, or whatever name you may give it, it is there. You can offer explanations but you cannot explain it away. Even illusion is true as illusion.*

*Brahma is Brahma, he is the infinite ideal of perfection. But we are not what we truly are; we are ever to become true, ever to become Brahma. There is the eternal play of love in the relation between this being and the becoming; and in the depth of this mystery is the source of all truth and beauty that sustains the endless march of creation.*

*In the music of the rushing stream sounds the joyful assurance, "I shall become the sea." It is not a vain assumption; it is true humility, for it is the truth. The river has no other alternative. On both sides of its banks it has numerous fields and forests, villages and towns; it can serve them in various ways, cleanse them and feed them, carry their produce from place to place. But it can have only partial relations with these, and however long it may linger among them it remains separate; it never can become a town or a forest.*

*BUT IT CAN AND DOES become the sea. The lesser moving water has its affinity with the great motionless water of the ocean. It moves through the thousand objects on its onward course, and its motion finds its finality when it reaches the sea.*

*In the same manner, our soul can become Brahma as the river can become the sea. Everything else she touches at one of her points, then leaves and moves on, but she never can leave Brahma and move beyond him. Once our soul realizes her ultimate object of repose in Brahma, all her movements acquire a purpose.*

— Rabindranath Tagore

## A PARENT'S PRAYER

HELP ME to the stature of good parenthood. I pray I may let my child live his own life and not the one I wish I had lived. Therefore, guard me against burdening him with doing what I failed to do, and when tempted to seek this balm for old wounds, strengthen me against my self justification.

Help me to see today's missteps in perspective against the long road he must go, and grant me the grace of patience with his slow pace.

Give me the precious wisdom of knowing when to smile at the small mischiefs of his age and when to give him the haven of firmness against the impulses which in his heart he fears and cannot master. In time of needed punishment give me a warm heart and a gentle voice so he may feel the rule of order is his friend and clasp it to his soul to be his conscience.

HELP ME TO HEAR the anguish in his heart through the din of angry words or across the gulf of brooding silence, and having heard, give me the grace to bridge the gap between us with understanding warmth.

STILL FROM MY VOICE and smooth from my brow all that mars infectious serenity and joy in living; rather let my face so shine that these later years will seem to him a promised land toward which to strive. I pray that I may raise my voice more in joy at what he is, than in vexation at what he has done; so each day he may grow in sureness of himself.

Help me to hold him with such warmth as will give him friendliness toward fellow man; then give me the fortitude to free him to go strongly on his way.

— M. B. Durfee, M.D.

# THE FRUITS OF ADVERSITY

*Francis Merchant*

How do men respond to circumstance?

Cervantes was thrown into jail. Instead of being overwhelmed by this disgrace, he used the enforced leisure to write a literary masterpiece. *Don Quixote* has delighted many generations of readers.

*BLINDNESS DEPRIVED* John Milton of vision and compelled him to turn inward. The bright world of sight was forever shut out. This deprivation did not plunge him into mental gloom, however. During this period of affliction he wrote *Paradise Lost,* a notable literary achievement.

Beethoven was stricken with deafness. For a composer, the loss of hearing is particularly excruciating. Nevertheless, in this state he wrote some of his most stirring and inspiring music.

Mozart was hounded by poverty. In spite of his straitened circumstances, he poured forth melody upon melody that amazed and delighted posterity.

Emily Dickinson received little recognition in her lifetime. In fact, few persons knew of her existence. Her later years were spent as a recluse in the creative quietness of her home. Today she is known as one of the greatest poets of nineteenth century America. Out of her loneliness she created arresting verse.

Demosthenes, the famous Greek orator, had a speech impediment in his youth. In an effort to overcome it, he became an eloquent speaker.

Francis Parkman, despite many years of failing health, wrote stirring histories that brought him fame. At times he was so incapacitated that he could barely write a few lines a day.

William Prescott lost one eye and seriously impaired the other in an accident while he was a student at Harvard. Difficulty in reading did not prevent him from writing several books on history. His *Conquest of Mexico* has become a classic.

*WHEN OLD AGE* made it impossible for him to read or write, Leopold von Ranke was nevertheless able to dictate a history of the world. While younger men retired, he continued to work feverishly. At the advanced age of ninety-one, he was still actively engaged in writing. Persistent ill-health brought him much suffering, but did not put an end to his endeavors.

All these illustrations underline a psychological fact, namely,

that circumstances are of less importance than our response to them. Some persons are completely and catastrophically overwhelmed by ill-health, calamity, failure, and disgrace; others, by the magic of the will and the spirit, transmute their sufferings into victories.

Although some men have succeeded in changing disabilities into assets, others have converted good fortune into disaster. Judas is a notable case in point. He was a disciple of the Master Teacher, yet became a betrayer. Newspaper headlines provide examples every other day of persons who misuse wealth and waste talent.

*ONE MAN INHERITS* a fortune and straightway takes to drink; another, under the same conditions, becomes a philanthropist. Even though handicapped by lack of schooling, Abraham Lincoln achieved a well-wrought literary style. Many persons who are given long years of training, on the other hand, produce little that is memorable.

*RESPONSE IS REVELATORY.* It indicates the texture of a man's inner life. Faced with the same situation, individuals react in decidedly different ways. Many people pawn their principles in order to escape poverty—but St. Francis gloried in it. Old age is regarded by some as a melancholy period of progressive deterioration—but a host of outstanding men like Socrates, Buddha, Verdi, Goethe, and Leonardo da Vinci did not find themselves robbed of their creative powers by the advancing years. Lack of recognition has discouraged many a writer, but Emily Dickinson sang her songs contentedly in the greatest obscurity. Perhaps we might paraphrase a Biblical statement and say, By their *responses* ye shall know them.

*Anyone who sees with the eye of the flesh but does not see with the eye of the spirit is blind to the truth and always rejects the truth when it is presented to him.*

— Virgil L. McComb

# MOHAMMED: PROPHET OF GOD

*Thomas Carlyle*

(Carlyle's famous book HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP (1840) contained a remarkable portrait and interpretation of Mohammed, founder of Islam. We have selected some salient passages from this section of his book and present them to our readers as this month's contribution toward world brotherhood and greater harmony among all the world religions.)

*A DEEP, GREAT, GENUINE SINCERITY IS* the first characteristic of all men in any way heroic. The Great Man does not boast himself sincere, far from that; perhaps does not ask himself if he is so: I would say rather, his sincerity does not depend on himself; he cannot help being sincere! The great Fact of Existence is great to him. Fly as he will, he cannot get out of the awful presence of this Reality. His mind is so made; he is great by that, first of all. Fearful and wonderful, real as Life, real as Death, is this Universe to him. Though all men should forget its truth, and walk in a vain show, he cannot. At all moments the Flame-image glares in upon him; undeniable, there, there!

*Such a man is what we call* an *original man; he comes to us at first hand. A messenger he, sent from the Infinite Unknown with tidings to us. In one way or other, we all feel that the words he utters are as no other man's words. Direct from the Inner Fact of things—he lives, and has to live, in daily communion with that. It is from the heart of the world that he comes; he is portion of the primal reality of things.*

Mahomet, then, we will in no wise consider as a poor conscious ambitious schemer; we cannot conceive him so. The man's words were not false, nor his workings here below—a fiery mass of Life cast up from the great bosom of Nature herself. To kindle the world: the world's Maker had ordered it so...

*Of the thing we call school-learning, he had none at all. Life in the Desert, with its experiences was all his education. Except by what he could see for himself, or hear of by uncertain rumor of speech in the obscure Arabian Desert, he could know nothing. Of the great brother souls, flame-beacons through so many lands and times, no one directly communicates with this great soul. He is alone there, deep down in the*

*bosom of the Wilderness; alone with Nature and his own thoughts.*

*BUT FROM AN EARLY AGE,* he had been remarked as a thoughtful man. His companions named him *"Al Amin,* The Faithful." A man of truth and fidelity; true in what he did, in what he spake and thought. They noted that he always meant something. A man rather taciturn in speech; silent when there was nothing to be said; but pertinent, wise, sincere, when he did speak; always throwing light on the matter. Through life we find him to have been regarded as an altogether solid, brotherly, genuine man. A serious, sincere character; yet amiable, cordial, companionable, jocose even...One hears of Mahomet's beauty: his fine sagacious honest face, brown florid complexion, beaming black eyes...A spontaneous, passionate, yet just, true-meaning man! Full of wild faculty, fire and light; of wild worth, all uncultured; working out his life-task in the depths of the Desert there.

How he was placed with Kadijah, a rich widow, as her Steward, and traveled in her business; how he managed all, as one can well understand, with fidelity, adroitness; how her gratitude, her regard for him grew: the story of their marriage is altogether a graceful intelligible one, as told us by the Arab authors. He was twenty-five; she forty, though still beautiful. He seems to have lived in a most affectionate, peaceable, wholesome way with this wedded benefactress; loving her truly and her alone. It goes greatly against the imposter theory, the fact that he lived in this entirely unexceptionable, quiet and commonplace way, till the heat of his years was done. He was forty before he talked of any mission from Heaven...

*THIS DEEP-HEARTED SON of the Wilderness, with his beaming black eyes and open social deep soul, had other thoughts in him than ambition. A silent great soul; he was one of those who cannot but be in earnest; whom Nature herself has appointed to be sincere. While others walk in formulas and hearsay, contented enough to dwell there, this man could not screen himself in formulas; he was alone with his own soul and the reality of things. The great mystery of Existence, as I said, glared-in upon him, with its terrors, with its splendors; no hearsays could hide that unspeakable fact, "Here am I!" Such sincerity, as we named it, has in every truth something of the divine. The word of such a man is a Voice direct from Nature's own Heart. Men do and must listen to that as to nothing else.*

From of old, a thousand thoughts, in his pilgrimings and wanderings, had been in this man: What am I? What is this unfathomable Thing I live in, which men name Universe? What is Life; what is Death? *What am I to believe? What am I to do?* The grim rocks of Mount Hara, of Mount Sinai, the stern sandy solitudes answered not. The great Heaven rolling silent overhead, with its blue-glancing stars answered not. There was no answer. The man's own soul, and what of God's inspiration dwelt there, had to answer!...

*MAHOMET HAD BEEN WONT* to retire yearly, during the month Ramadan, into solitude and silence; as indeed was the Arab custom; a praiseworthy custom, which such a man, above all, would find natural and useful. Communing with his own heart, in the silence of the mountains; himself silent; open to the 'small still voices'...Mahomet was in his fortieth year, when having withdrawn to a cavern in Mount Hara, near Mecca, to pass the month in prayer, and meditation on these great questions, he one day told his wife Kadijah, who with his household was with him or near him this year, That by the unspeakable special favor of Heaven he had now found it all out; was in doubt and darkness no longer, but saw it all. That all these Idols and Formulas were nothing, miserable bits of wood; that there was One God in and over all; and we must leave all Idols, and look to Him. That God is great; and that there is nothing else great! He is the Reality. Wooden Idols are not real; He is real. He made us at first, sustains us yet; we and all things are but the shadow of Him; a transitory garment veiling the Eternal Splendor. *'Allah akbar,* God is great';—and then also *'Islam,'* That we must submit to God. That our whole strength lies in resigned submission to Him, whatsoever He do to us. For this world, and for the other! The thing He sends to us, were it death and worse than death, shall be good, shall be best; we resign ourselves to God.—'If this be *Islam,'* says Goethe, 'do we not all live in *Islam?'*

*ALL OF US that have any mortal life; we all live so. It has ever been held the highest wisdom for a man not merely to submit to Necessity but to know and believe well that the stern thing which Necessity had ordered was the wisest, the best, the thing wanted there; to know that this great God's World had verily, though deep beyond his soundings, a Just Law, that the soul of it was God; that his part in it was to conform to the Law of the Whole, and in devout silence follow that; not questioning it, obeying it as unquestionable.*

I say, this is yet the only true morality known. A man is right

and invincible, virtuous and on the road toward sure conquest, precisely while he joins himself to the great deep Law of the World; he is victorious while he cooperates with that great central Law, not victorious otherwise; and surely his first chance of cooperating with it, or getting into the course of it, is to know with his whole soul that it is; that it is good, and alone good! *This is the soul of Islam; it is properly the soul of Christianity.* For Christianity also commands us, before all, to be resigned to God. We are to know that we know nothing; that the worst and cruelest to our eyes is not what it seems; that we have to receive whatsoever befalls us as sent from God above, and say, It is good and wise, God is great! "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Islam means Denial of Self, Annihilation of Self. This is yet the highest Wisdom that Heaven has revealed to our Earth...

*SUCH LIGHT HAS COME TO illuminate the darkness of this wild Arab soul. That Mahomet's whole soul, set in flame with this grand Truth vouchsafed him, should feel as if it were important and the only important thing, was very natural. That Providence had unspeakably honored him by revealing it, saving him from death and darkness; that he therefore was bound to make known the same to all creatures: this is what was meant by 'Mahomet is the Prophet of God;' this too is not without its true meaning.*

The good Kadijah, we can fancy, listened to him with wonder, with doubt. At length she answered: Yes, it was true, this that he said. One can fancy too the boundless gratitude of Mahomet; and how of all the kindnesses she had done him, this of believing the earnest struggling word he now spoke was the greatest. He never forgot this good Kadijah. Long afterward, Ayesha his young favorite wife, a woman who indeed distinguished herself among the Moslems by all manner of qualities, through her whole long life; this young brilliant Ayesha was one day questioning him: "Now am I not better than Kadijah? She was a widow; old, and had lost her looks: you love me better than you did her?"—"No," answered Mahomet. "She believed in me when none else would believe. In the whole world I had but one friend, and she was that!"

*Mahomet can work no miracles; he often answers impatiently: I can work no miracles. I? 'I am a Public Teacher', appointed to preach this doctrine to all creatures. Yet the world, as we can see, had really from of old been all one great miracle to him. Miracles? cries he. What miracle would you have? Are not you yourselves there? God made you,*

*'shaped you out of a little clay'. Ye were small once; a few years ago ye were not at all. Ye have beauty, strength, thoughts, 'ye have compassion on one another'. This struck me much: Allah might have made you having no compassion on one another—how had it been then! This is a great direct thought, a glance at first hand into the very fact of things...*

*TO HIS EYES IT IS FOREVER clear that this world wholly is miraculous. He sees that this so solid-looking material world is, at bottom, in very deed, Nothing; is a visual and tactual Manifestation of God's power and presence,—a shadow hung out by Him on the bosom of the void Infinite; nothing more. The universal empire of Allah, presence everywhere of an unspeakable Power, a Splendor, and a Terror not to be named, as the true force, essence and reality, in all things whatsoever, was continually clear to this man...*

Much has been said and written about the sensuality of Mahomet's Religion; more than was just. The indulgences which he permitted, were not of his appointment; he found them practiced, unquestioned from immemorial time in Arabia; what he did was to curtail them, restrict them, not on one, but on many sides. His Religion is not an easy one: with rigorous fasts, lavations, strict complex formulas, prayers five times a day, and abstinence from wine, it did not 'succeed by being an easy religion.' As if any religion could succeed by that! It is a calumny on men to say that they are roused to heroic action by ease, hope of pleasure, recompense,—sugarplums of any kind, in this world or the next! In the meanest mortal there lies something nobler. It is not to taste sweet things, but to do noble and true things, and vindicate himself under God's Heaven as a god-made man, that the poorest son of Adam dimly longs. Show him the way of doing that, the dullest daydrudge kindles into a hero. They wrong man greatly who say he is to be seduced by ease. Difficulty, abnegation, martyrdrom, death are the allurements that act on the heart of man. Kindle the inner genial life of him, you have a flame that burns up all lower considerations. Not happiness, but something higher. Not by flattering our appetites; no, by awakening the Heroic that slumbers in every heart, can any Religion gain followers.

*MAHOMET HIMSELF* was not a sensual man. His household was of the frugalest; his common diet barley-bread and water; sometimes for months there was not a fire once lighted on his hearth. They record with just pride that he would mend his own shoes, patch his own cloak. A poor, hard-toiling, ill-provided man; careless of what vulgar men toil

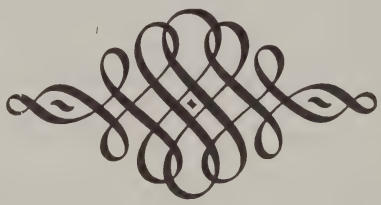
for. Not a bad man, I should say,—or these wild Arab men, fighting and jostling three-and-twenty years at his hand, in close contact with him always, would not have reverenced him so! They were wild men, bursting ever and anon into quarrel, into all kinds of fierce sincerity; without right worth and manhood, no man could have commanded them. They called him Prophet, you say? Why, he stood there face to face with them; bare, not enshrined in any mystery; visibly clouting his own cloak, cobbling his own shoes; fighting, counseling, ordering in the midst of them; they must have seen what kind of a man he was, let him be called what you like! No emperor with his tiaras was obeyed as this man in a cloak of his own clouting. During three-and-twenty years of rough actual trial. I find something of a veritable Hero necessary for that, of itself...

*Mahomet's Paradise is sensual, his Hell sensual. But we are to recollect that the Arabs already had it so; that Mahomet, in whatever he changed of it, softened and diminished all this. The worst sensualities, too, are the work of doctors, followers of his, not his work. In the Koran there is really very little said about the joys of Paradise; they are intimated rather than insisted on. Nor is it forgotten that the highest joys even there shall be spiritual: the pure Presence of the Highest, this shall infinitely transcend all other joys. 'Ye shall sit on seats,' he says, 'facing one another: all grudges shall be taken away out of your hearts'. All grudges! Ye shall love one another freely; for each of you, in the eyes of his brothers, there will be Heaven enough!*

*FOR THESE TWELVE CENTURIES,* Mahomet's Religion has been the life-guidance of the fifth part of the whole kindred of Mankind. Above all things, it has been a religion heartily believed. These Arabs believe their religion, and try to live by it! No Christians, since the early ages, have ever stood by their Faith as the Moslems do by theirs,—believing it wholly, fronting Time with it, and Eternity with it. This night the watchman on the streets of Cairo when he cries, "Who goes?" will hear from the passenger, along with his answer, "There is no God but God." *Allah akbar, Islam...*

*To the Arab Nation it was as a birth from darkness into light; Arabia first became alive by means of it. A poor shepherd people, roaming unnoticed in its desert since the creation of the world; a Hero-prophet was sent down to them with a word they could believe: see, the unnoticed becomes world notable, the small has grown world-great; within one century afterward, Arabia is at Grenada on this hand, at Delhi on that;—*

*glancing in valor and splendor and the light of genius, Arabia shines through long ages over a great section of the world. Belief is great, life-giving. The history of a Nation becomes fruitful, soul-elevating, great, so soon as it believes. These Arabs, the man Mahomet, and that one century,—is it not as if a spark had fallen, one spark, on a world of what seemed black unnoticeable sand; but lo the sand proves explosive powder, blazes heaven-high from Delhi to Grenada! I said, the Great Man was always as lightning out of Heaven; the rest of men waited for him like fuel, and then they too would flame.*



## *VOICES FROM THE MOUNTAIN*

*Sibilant whisper of pines*
*Echoes the lonely cry of eagles*
*Circling the mountain crest.*
*Crumbling of thunder shocks*
*Slides down the mountain side,*
*Spilling a cascade of alabaster*
*Into the silent jad depths*
*Of the lake.*
*Storm javelins pierce the heart of a tree*
*And the cry rends the air*
*With pain and death.*
*Snow feathers fall*
*From the white swan of the sky*
*And bruise my heart.*
*I watch from the rim of the hill one star*
*Splintering the turquoise crystal of*
*twilight.*

— Zelma Dennis

## THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Why is it we feel so satisfied during the Christmas season? If we analyze it, I think we will find that then we are not thinking primarily of ourselves. We like to see others happy; making them happy on Christmas is our only concern. We are then necessary to their happiness, and to be necessary is a great joy. This is the beauty of Christmas.

*BUT WHEN CHRISTMAS IS PAST, is beauty gone also? Does beauty exist only at Christmas? Of course not. How many times other than at Christmas have we felt satisfied and apart from ourselves because we saw something greater than ourselves? We have felt this every time we have thought of another first, or when we have observed the nature of art or science or love or of thought itself. If the sense of beauty was ours at Christmas, will it not be ours in these other experiences also? As at Christmas, we will forget our personal woes, we will be lifted up, and the magic of beauty will cure us of our troubled hearts whenever we observe the beauty of the nature of a thing. For in beauty there is peace.*

— John Homac

## SING REQUIEM

*Sing requiem for wasted hours,*
*For love unshared, for unused powers,*
*And all bright promise unfulfilled,*
*All essence of a spirit stilled*
*By thoughtless deed or casual word,*
*Or plea for help that dies unheard,*
*All flowering of youth denied*
*By fogs of prejudice or pride.*
*The ghosts of all omissions rise*
*Until the very rain implies*
*An endless mourning for lost souls*
*With ill-defined, unreached-for goals.*

— Alice M. Swaim

# IS THE STRANGER MY BROTHER TODAY?

*Marion H. Freeman*

Is the stranger my brother today? And who is the stranger? He may be a foreigner, an intruder, a person with whom one is unacquainted or he may be a neighbor near by. And my neighbor is my fellow-man, who may also be my brother, an associate, an equal or a peer.

*THE STRANGER* may one day come to be a friend, but until he does acquire that position, what place does he hold in your life and mine?

Perhaps one cannot count on being safe with the stranger nor can one count on being welcomed by him, but I believe that each of us does have an obligation to the stranger who crosses our path, as well as to those beyond the fringe of our lives. We can bless him!

The stranger may be an intruder and unwelcome or he may become an honored guest. One may not always be forewarned of the difference.

*HOW PAINFUL,* sometimes, to be the unknown stranger. Matthew wrote of Jesus, "When I was a stranger, ye took me in." Was it dangerous for His countrymen when they accepted Him under their roof, not really knowing who He was?

Life was filled with terror for the common people in the days when Jesus went about preaching his gospel of love. We have advanced scientifically and with social reforms and in countless other ways but the stranger still remains a problem. It is so often an individual solution and conditioned by particular circumstances.

In the days of Moses, when he was preparing the laws for his people, he was asked by some of his elders what was the disposition of the stranger at the time of the passover, and he answered, "If a stranger is residing with you and would observe the passover of the Lord, he must follow the statutes for the passover and its ordinances—." Do we therefore expect the stranger to 'do as we do'?

Again Moses reminded his people, in remembrance of their captivity, "Love ye therefore the stranger; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." Have you ever noted that this reminder is still observed?

*HAVE YOU EVER* been a stranger, either in your own land or in another country? Many of us have. Do you recall how it felt? Do you recoil at some of your recollections? Or do you remember when some stranger extended you the warmth and courtesy of his heart?

Sometimes we must, of necessity, pass the stranger by, though he has crossed our path. The reasons are many. But there is something which we may do for the stranger; we have the power to bless him!

If each of us would extend this wonderful gift, it might lighten his heart or ease his pain or loneliness—even though he is not aware of our existence. No blessing goes astray.

*WE ALL KNOW* that sometimes the heart is lifted up when there seems to be no logical reason for it. Some will say that it is all physical but it may well be that somewhere, someone has asked a blessing, not only on his loved ones but on the stranger as well. Sometimes, you or I just might be that stranger.

If you or I have been blessed, aware or unaware, what happens to us? Someone, somewhere, has extended himself to include us in the brotherhood of Love. We are warmed by this thought and in turn extend ourselves to others in like manner as well as in more tangible ways.

Is the stranger, then, my brother today? I believe he may *become* my brother. ✣ ✣

## *GENESIS RETURNING*

*(Another Spring)*

*Be made to glow, glow beautiful; let eyes*
*And lips like flowers bloom, make bright this place*
*Be now renewed as you renew, arise*
*And be Samaritan. This glad day face*
*The perilled world and rouse it to the need*
*There is for hope, that people long-distressed*
*May find with bold expectancy a creed*
*Of healing-balm beneficent and blessed.*

*Receive this gift, this Genesis returning,*
*Defined by every joyous thing on earth.....*
*As though the suns and moons of winter's yearning*
*Had blossomed here in re-discovered birth*
*Where faith and resurrections never fail*
*Where Signs of God and miracles prevail.*

— Carla Patsuris

## MY SOUL HAS WINGS

*Mildred Long*

My soul has wings to scale the utmost heights and explore the far reaches of heavenly places.

The darkness of earth cannot bind my wings. The trackless sea of grief holds no terror for me, for the wings of my soul will soar and bank, fly and rest, until all is calm again. Unchartered deserts of misfortune may lie before me, but my wings bear me triumphantly above and across these barren wastes and set me down again in green pastures and by still waters. For the Lord God has made me only "a little lower than the angels." To me, as well as to them, He gives wings.

My soul has wings, *the wings of faith and prayer.*

These wings give me the power and the freedom of the eagle. They enable me to build the house of my inner life on solid rock high above the city mist and smoke, out on the far reaches of a lofty crag.

*HERE I LIVE* in the world but not of it. From this high vantage point I see the adventure and challenge of life.

I make my contacts with men and things, but ever and anon I fly back to my pinnacle and breathe deeply of the air of celestial purity.

With these powerful wings I rise above all worry, fear, anger, and resentment. The siren cries of self-pity cannot reach me.

My wings carry me to unknown heights of joy and peace, and soaring wider and higher, I sail unhampered far into the outer reaches of spiritual understanding.

*AND IN THESE* high flights my soul is reborn, revitalized, that it may return to earth and live its life span in the glory of a never dying realization: the power of God indwelling.

## TRAVELERS

The stirring of the soul reaching upward for God is the only worthwhile journey a mortal may make during a lifetime.

— E. D. Taylor

# FROM THE CHRYSALIS

*Zelma S. Dennis*

*IT IS AMAZING TO DISCOVER in the world of nature a multitude of examples that follow the tangents of man's existence. I was watching some lovely butterflies winging their gay carefree way from flower to flower one spring afternoon, when I became aware of a striking analogy of their lives in relation to man.*

*Butterflies begin their lives in a most mundane way in the form of drab caterpillars. This is a very picturesque description of our day-to-day type of thinking, colorless and motivated in general by everyday problems. The caterpillar's existence is brief and faces an early demise, even as many of our problems that arise from day to day. But like the caterpillar, problems of our life merely submerge themselves for awhile in a period of sleeping or thinking or, as science calls it, suspended animation, until the rebirth or reawakening occurs.*

*THIS RENASCENT QUALITY we likewise find in our mental world: a resurgence of new and promising ideas which spring forth from the chrysalis of sleep, or the subconscious mind, like butterflies. These beauties, products of contemplation and the quiescent realm of the subconscious, rise to delight the eyes of the world. True prayer rises from the contemplative soul, involuntary praise riding sun-gloried wings to bring the blessing of the Creator's light.*

*THE DEEP PRAYERS that we call forth daily to surround our loved ones bless the world about us and establish eternal communion with God. The creative thought forms rise from the quiet chrysalis of the meditative heart to seek the effulgent light of a receptive world. These are winged messengers conveying the promise of wisdom and peace, the answer of our prayers to God.*

## WISDOM FOR THE DAY

*Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.*

*AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly, and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant—they too have their story.*

*Avoid loud and aggressive persons; tney are vexatious to the spirit.*

*If you compare yourself with others you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.*

*Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.*

*Exercise caution in business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.*

*BE YOURSELF. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is as perennial as the grass.*

*Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.*

*YOU ARE A CHILD of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God. . .and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul.*

*With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.*

— *Max Ehrmann*
In BETWEEN DAWN AND DARK

## NOTICES and COMMENTS

*FIP NOTES.* We wish to thank all who sent in orders for our special Christmas cards. The response was most encouraging. Our advisor and contributing artist, Helen Dudley Young, who designed these cards, plans to have five new designs available for Christmas cards in 1963. We suggest that those who are interested should place their orders at any time during the year. Sample cards and an order price-list will be sent on request...Many of our readers will recall the outstanding illustrations which the noted New York artist, Edward C. Caswell, another Fellowship in Prayer contributing artist, drew for our publication in past years. We regret to announce that Mr. Caswell passed away on December 30 in New York, at the age of eighty-three. He was a man of refined and sensitive character, as well as of uncommon artistic talent, and will be missed.

*CONTRIBUTORS.* After too long an absence, it is good to have with us again The Reverend Roy Wallace Thomas of Denver, whose *Tragic Factor* appears on page 14. It is one of his characteristically reflective and forceful articles. Mr. Thomas is recovering from a protracted and dangerous illness that extended through much of 1962. We earnestly hope that his recovery will soon be complete...Max Ehrmann's *Wisdom For The Day* on page 34 is drawn from BETWEEN DAWN AND DARK, published by The Upper Room, 1908 Grand Ave., Nashville, Tennessee...Mrs. Marion H. Freeman's *Is The Stranger My Brother Today* makes an appropriate debut in FIP. Mrs. Freeman resides in Winthrop, Mass. We are happy to welcome her to our pages. Also appearing in this issue for the first time, with shorter pieces, are Mr. John Homac of Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Mr. Virgil L. McComb of Sacramento, Calif. Mr. Homac's *The Beauty of Things* and Mr. McComb's contribution appear on pages 29 and 21 respectively. We are happy to have them with us.

*SUBSCRIPTION RATES.* FIP is published six times a year at the rate of $3.00. Special rates are available for additional copies. Certain back issues are also available.

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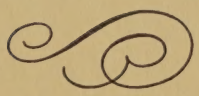
## *SACRIFICE*

*A Presence tall and stern appeared to me.*
*"Behold," he said, "my name is Sacrifice.*
*Men blanch when I am introduced, and flee*
*When I would speak. If I but state my price,*
*They shrink from me and sadly turn away.*
*I've knocked on many doors, but few have dared*
*To invite me in, or requested me to stay;*
*And at my very voice, they have despaired.*
*But those who learn to read my heart aright*
*Know otherwise. The discerning few, mark this,*
*Have found my counsel and my visage bright*
*With hope and joy, for my other name is Bliss.*
*I sadly smile at those who flee in fear,*
*Not knowing that my hand bears balm and cheer."*

— Francis Merchant



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